

REENGAGING HISTORY WITH HARLENE ANDERSON: NOSEY ROSIE *GOES!* PART II

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In Part II of “Reengaging History With Harlene Anderson,” we are spectators to the history of Harlene Anderson’s relationship with Harry Goolishian. We witness the evolution of thinking beginning in 1970 as Harlene Anderson moved from a traditional psychology graduate program to being swept away into the world of Harry Goolishian, his colleagues, and family therapy—a new world embedded in context and multiple realities beginning a journey that would become a significant and meaningful part of her life. They moved from inspiring conversations over dinners of freshly caught flounder at Harry Goolishian’s waterfront home to the creation of the Galveston Family Institute and a broader sense of community.

JIM: Harlene, I’m quite curious about how you and Harry met. How was he attracted to your thinking? Can you tell me about your relationship with Harry?

HARLENE: Well, we met when I started working at the medical school [University of Texas Medical Branch–UTMB] in Galveston in the Pediatric Department. Harry was in the Psychiatry Department and director of the Psychology Division; there was a lot of exciting talk back then about family therapy. Harry and his colleagues in the Psychiatry Department had been involved in family therapy research and training since the late 1950s [referring to the multiple impact therapy project (MIT)]. At that time, I had never heard of it.

J: So, at that point you had never heard of family therapy?

H: No, never.

We would like to acknowledge Pat Shelenko’s diligent work in transcribing the original interview.
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J: What year would this be?

H: This was 1970. I came from a very traditional psychology graduate program.

DIANA: That's all there were.

H: Never heard the words *family therapy*. I had no idea what they were talking about, but what caught my attention was their enthusiasm. I thought, I've got to find out what this is all about.

J: You were trained as a psychologist.

H: Very traditionally. Yes, I used to love testing and diagnosing all those little kids and writing those reports and making recommendations for treatment. At that time, I really believed psychological evaluations were important and I felt so clever.

J: . . . you felt clever.

H: I loved doing the evaluations. I started in the Pediatric Department in June, and the family therapy training started in September. I signed up for it. I went to the very first meeting and Harry Goolishian and his colleagues were the faculty. Oh my gosh, I never knew this world existed! In that very first training session, I began to reflect on experiences that I had before then. I had previously worked in an elementary school as a school psychologist, and in the very first community mental health center in Houston, which was part of the War on Poverty program.

J: That would've been late sixties?

H: Yeah.

J: . . . so this is also imbedded in a powerful social context.

H: Absolutely, I was one of the War on Poverty foot soldiers. Prior to working in the medical school, I was working in a community mental health center, and they had an inpatient unit, a day hospital, recreational therapy, outpatient therapy, and home visits. They incorporated all kinds of treatment modalities, including role-playing and psychodrama. The woman who was the head of this program was an occupational therapist, which was unusual as it was usually a psychiatrist or psychologist. I think at that time this distinction didn't catch my attention. I was the youngest, the newest, and I thought I had the worst position. I was the rotator, sort of the fill-in person. I might work for few days, or a week or two, on the inpatient unit and then rotate to recreational therapy. Can you imagine trying to play basketball with someone doing the Thorazine shuffle? Or, I might be weaving baskets with someone smoking so many cigarettes that the materials are about to catch on fire. Or, I might do home visits to check on patients after discharge from the center. So, what happened in that very first training was that I was introduced to some contexts that I had never heard the importance of before—such as the broader context and multiple realities. Of course, I had heard of context, but its importance was never highlighted, and I'd certainly not heard of multiple realities. What I began to reflect on and think about was that, oh my gosh, I have been working in these multiple contexts, multiple realities, and I began to think about how this influenced me, what I did, what I said, even what I wore. I began to realize that the person that I saw in a hospital bed and the person I saw in the day

hospital were embedded in a broader context that influenced how I experienced and interacted with them. Then, I went out into a very poor community to visit discharged patients in their homes, where people lived in conditions that I had not experienced before; for instance, you would walk into someone's home and there was a roach convention. Basically, there were just very very poor conditions and often not very clean conditions, and with little furniture or anything else. I remember knocking on a door one day and the man who came to the door didn't look like the man that I met in the hospital. Did I have the wrong address? Must have because it had only been a few weeks and he couldn't look that different. But it was him. He then introduced me to his wife and I thought, hum, he must have a new wife, because this was not the wife that the social worker described in the hospital chart when he was admitted. At that time, you never met the wife or the family members. I began to realize that people were different in different contexts. I realized that I was different as well. When I worked on the inpatient unit, I wore a little white coat with my name embroidered on it. I'm embarrassed to say it, but it's at that time that I was young and the least experienced one, so that little white coat made me feel important and that people would think I knew what I was doing. In the day hospital, I would wear something different than if I was weaving baskets, or trying to play volleyball or basketball. When I went out into the community, I dressed down and wore my tennis shoes. The people I met in each of these contexts were different. I was not that different and I thought differently about them. I acted differently and they acted differently. It was not the same to meet someone in their home as it had been in the center. This was my first experience of working with people in their home. I think this is an experience that could be beneficial to all therapists, especially beginning ones—to have a sense of people's everyday context and life.

J: Was this experience of working in a community mental health center preparing you to be more open to the experience of learning family therapy and understanding peoples' identities in a broader range of social contexts?

H: But, I had no idea what it was. It was just something that caught my attention. At the end of the first training meeting, the shoe dropped. Harry Goolishian announced that if you are going to continue in this training, you have to be seeing families. Well, I was stunned. I thought that's why I'm here, right? To learn what to do. He was very adamant that this whole notion of theory and practice go hand in hand and that you learn both together, not in some step-ordered fashion. So I went back to my psychologist boss and said, well, I went to the family therapy training and to go back, I need to see families. I don't know what to do. Everyone seems to be working in teams. Would you be willing to go to the family therapy seminar with me? Would you sign up for it? Would you be willing to see a family before we go to the next one? Well, I guess he was trying to appease me, and he said yes. So, we declared the very next case that came in to our team, our family.

D: That must've been interesting.

H: The referral was a little boy, with a family that had emigrated just a year previously from Cuba. He was diagnosed with ADHD by a previous psychologist. I still remember that family, the mother, the father, and the little boy very vividly.

J: That was the first family.

H: That was the first family. Then, just by the luck of the draw, when went to the next family therapy training session, Harry Goolishian was appointed our supervisor.

J: I don't want to sound deterministic, but it's like it was meant to be.

H: It's like Harry used to say, "Luck was noticing an opportunity that was in front of you that you had not expected." I think it was just luck that I ended up there. I had this friend that I had been in school with, and we both lived in the same Clear Lake area and both applied to jobs together. Neither of us received a response from Harry Goolishian the first time I applied for a position there in the Psychology Department. I was just enthralled with the ideas, with what they were doing with families, and with Harry's wisdom. You know, I must have thought, oh my gosh, Harry Goolishian is my supervisor! Of course, I really didn't know then how prominent he had been in the state of Texas, and nationally and in the world in psychology. He was on the governor's team that evaluated some state juvenile institutions and instrumental in having them closed down. He had at that time probably accomplished all the professional milestones that any psychologist would dream of. He was very influential.

J: How did knowing that, finding that out, make a difference for you at that point?

H: Well, it took me a while to realize all these things. I didn't realize it at all then.

D: Because he's modest?

H: He didn't talk about these kind of things. I would hear from other people.

J: You used the phrase, "the shoe dropped."

H: Yes. At the end you had to be seeing a family, or you couldn't come to the seminar. You had to be actively involved in the practice. I was so engaged with what I had experienced at that time, well, I wasn't going to let that stop me. I'd find a way to see a family and I wouldn't know what I was doing, but I was going to figure it out. I was determined. Luckily, my boss in the Pediatric Department, my supervisor, was willing to participate and support my initiative to join the team.

J: Yes, generous.

H: Yes, to go along with me he signed up for the training and off we went. Then, I just got more and more interested in it. There was always, as I said, that sort of Galveston approach, which started with the multiple impact therapy research project in the late 1950s. The family therapy team was always studying various other approaches. When I started in the seminar, I don't think they were reading *Pragmatics [of Human Communication]*, but some book before *Pragmatics* was published, and *Pragmatics* shortly thereafter.

J: The book Paul Watzlawick co-authored with Janet Beavin Bavelas and Don Jackson.

H: Yes. So I just got more and more involved and started seeing more families. Then, Harry invited me in to join him as a co-therapist with a family, as he would do with all the students in the training program, and to have an opportunity to learn and videotape. Any moment that I could find, I would steal away from the Pediatric Department and go to the library, which had every family therapy book in print that you could imagine. Harry and his team always made sure the library ordered new family therapy books and journals as they came out.

J: Can you remember which books those were, or even some of them?

H: I can remember reading the early books that came out of MRI [Mental Research Institute] that were collections of articles by Jackson, Bateson, Weakland, Haley, and some others.

J: Is this is prior to *Change* [by Paul Watzlawick] and *Tactics of Change* [by Richard Fisch]?

H: Yes. These were published in the early sixties. You might want to see them sometimes. They have a little series; I have number one and number two in my library at home [Don Jackson's edited *Communication, Family, and Marriage and Therapy, Communication, and Change*]. I also began reading some things by Lynn Hoffman very early on.

J: Were those exciting times?

H: Yes, very exciting times. I enjoyed reading some of Jackson's work.

J: Don Jackson?

H: Yes. I was reading some of his early work, when he was the primary editor of the series. That was a long time ago.

J: A friend of mine, Wendell Ray, has archived just about everything that Don Jackson wrote.

H: He's done a fabulous job with it.

J: Is this going okay? Is it okay to continue asking you questions about this?

H: Absolutely,

J: So, how did your relationship with Harry evolve to the two of you being such a cohesive team, teaching and writing together and running the Institute?

H: Well, it evolved from my becoming part of the team with Harry. The team then focused on both clinical practice and theoretical ideas and consisted of, at one time or another, Harry, Paul Dell, Peggy Sheely, George Pullian, Dan Creson, Israela Meyestein, and myself. Paul is really the only one who had begun to publish; of course, Harry had a long list of publications prior to his involvement in family therapy. Just being really involved with the ideas, being really active with the team, seeing more clients with Harry, and then wanting to do some teaching and supervision myself, Harry invited me to begin doing workshops with him. Even if I wasn't participating in conducting a workshop, I would go to workshops that he would do, or a conference, or a talk, and I would be there and watch everything he did. He was an excellent teacher.

J: What was it about him that made him an excellent teacher?

H: His breadth of knowledge of the literature. His creativity, in terms of his ideas and his provocative responses to questions, and his provocative questions. He could invite you to be curious, to think. He could invite you to be not only challenging of your own ideas or your own biases, but of others. He could just stand up and talk about anything. He was an amazingly engaging storyteller. It was all of those things combined.

J: Would you say that you discovered a great opportunity by meeting Harry?

H: I did. I just stumbled into it, having no idea at all that I was beginning a journey that would become a significant and meaningful part of my life. I say stumbled in; in my family, as I was growing up, I was known as Nosey Rosie, always curious about who was doing what, who said what.

J: Is that right?

H: Oh, I was nosey. I wanted to know what was going on with this thing called family therapy. I had to go and find out. I just knew he had a lot to offer. Again, he was a very generous and kind person. As was his wife, Leslie. The medical school was just right across the street from a Holiday Inn. The team and our students would all go to the Holiday Inn for happy hour. Or, we would go to Harry's house. At Harry's, there was always beer and wine. Leslie had this popcorn popper that was going all the time. Then there were these neighbors that were always in and out. They would fish off his dock, and often when they had caught several flounder, they would give them to Leslie and she would cook for all of us. Their kitchen table became a conversational center. Talking over food and drink is still an important part of my life with my colleagues and students, both when at home and when traveling. Harry would say, "You might as well stay for dinner." Leslie would then whip up some mayonnaise mixture for the flounder and put them in the oven. And next thing you know there was a big salad. Then we would sit around his big round kitchen table overlooking the dock and Pelican Island, and continue the talk of the day.

J: Isn't it remarkable that our field is built on those kinds of conversations and large quantities of alcohol?

D: Exactly.

H: There was this point in time where there had always been this thing we called benign regret in the Psychiatry Department. Most others in the Department didn't know what we were doing. In fact, they really didn't care—most importantly, and to our advantage, the chair of Psychiatry. It was always a multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary mix of professionals in the trainings, not just mental health professionals. There were pediatricians, occupational therapists, nurses, and hospital chaplains. This whole introduction to transdisciplinary training became very important to me. The differences that people brought contributed richness to our conversations and learning. But, the chair retired and they hired a new chair. The new chair was a really "hot shot" psychiatric researcher. He had been doing research on airplane pilots' psychological conditions. He didn't know anything about family therapy. So, he didn't challenge family therapy in any way, but he did have his unique ideas about hierarchy in the medical professions. Psychology was below social work.

Usually it's psychiatry, psychology, and then social work; family therapy wasn't even on the list. He made it more and more difficult for us to be creative with what we wanted to do. So, Harry, Leslie, Paul Dell, George Pullian, and I were sitting around Harry's table one evening. We were just talking with Harry and grumbling and lamenting about what we were going to do to keep our momentum given the wave we were facing. We decided, let's have a conference. Let's see if anybody comes. At that time, the Flagship Hotel was a destination place for many people who came to the island [Galveston is a barrier reef island off the coast of Texas]. So, we had a one-day conference at the hotel. About 100 people attended the conference. We couldn't believe it.

D: What was the title of it?

H: I have no idea. I couldn't believe it. People came from Houston and other places. We just presented our work. I remember we were thinking, maybe we have something here. We had made a little bit of money from the registration fees and we didn't pay ourselves. Maybe we could create an Institute outside of the Psychiatry Department. That would give us a refuge, a place to go and do what we wanted to do. So that's how the idea of the Institute started: the Galveston Family Institute [GFI]. We ended up leasing an artist studio on The Strand in Galveston.

J: That sounds like a leap.

H: A huge leap. We looked at the studio the same night we found out about it. It had 20-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. The hallway in the building was about 12 feet wide with a ceiling covered with cardboard egg cartons.

J: The egg cartons were to dampen sound?

H: . . . to dampen the sound.

H: Then there was a huge room across the hall, which was about 20 by 40 feet, the length of the depth of the building. We thought we could have workshops there. Everybody got excited. We figured out how much it was going to cost us. Even though we made a little money at the workshop, we decided on the amount of money each of us would add to it. And we started a bank account for the Institute. Leslie got us a post office box. I think we officially incorporated in 1978, but we started all of this in 1977. There was one room that was very interesting because the wallpaper was women's breasts. Somebody said, we have to get rid of that wallpaper. Harry or Paul said it would be interesting to see if clients even notice it. This was the ideal room for the one-way mirror we were using at that time. We had not one single client who noticed the wallpaper, or if they did they didn't comment on it.

D: When did you quit your job?

H: This is also part of starting the Institute. So, we had a space; what were we going to do there? We had two psychology post docs working with us at UTMB. And of course, the four team members. They could not leave UTMB for different reasons, like retirement, one person's kids were going to college and UTMB would pay for it, and one member was in the middle of a divorce with child custody issues. He couldn't leave. Well, Harlene was unattached, and of course I was game. And

then we figured out that we could get clients. We weren't worried about getting clients or that we would have enough clinical work and trainees. We could pay the two post docs what they would be paid at the medical school. We wrote an article about the beginning of the Institute called "The Galveston Family Institute: A Historical Perspective."

J: I can resonate with the ambiguity, risk, and excitement and all of the things involved in a journey like that. If Harry could speak to it now, what would he say he saw in you that compelled him to do that? What was it about you that he recognized? Could you pick a word or a theme?

H: This is interesting because one time George Pullian said something like, you know why Harry selected you of all the team to continue to work with? I said, no. Well, he said he knew that you would be committed and that you were there for the long haul. That you would do your share of the work and that you were creative. You were all of these things that he really needed.

J: . . . so, those things that he valued, he saw those values, commitments, and abilities in you, and you were all these things he really needed?

H: I think so. It's not that Harry minded people competing with him because that was going on all the time, A series of younger colleagues would train with Harry, then used the fact that they worked with Harry to help them go off on their own. Nothing unusual.

D: There was a period of time when you or Harry were accused of being very sexist.

H: This is when feminist family therapy was beginning to be popular.

D: It would appear that Harlene would defer to Harry. And I don't think that was it at all. Harry was very "out there," and Harlene was subtle and quiet.

H: Why would I compete with Harry?

J: He sounds "bigger than life."

H: He wasn't the most visible person in room. I wouldn't say that, would you?

D: To me, he was. But I was in awe of him as a student. I never saw you as subservient.

H: What I said to one group of these feminist family therapists, who I worked with one time when they were saying, "how can you stand to work with Harry, he is such a chauvinist," was, I cannot tell you how many times I had been knocked down and mowed over by women trying to get to Harry. Of course, they knew what I meant because I was referring to them as well.

J: Let me ask the question in a different way. Kind of 180 degrees from the question, what did Harry appreciate about you that you contributed to his life and work? Looking back, what is it that stands out for you now that you appreciated about Harry? What compelled you? What was it about Harry that got you that excited, so much so that you just had to be involved?

H: I think that he noticed or decided I had potential, I was a creative thinker.

J: So he saw something in you.

H: He saw something in me and he nurtured that. He was kind of like my parents. He was always very warm and very encouraging.

J: What did that bring out in you? What was the experience like for you to be acknowledged that way, nurtured in that way by Harry Goolishian?

H: I wouldn't say that I was a person that did not have self-confidence, because I did. Self-confidence might not be the right word. It increased a sense of myself that said, just go for it. Harlene, you can do it!

D: Like that poem, "Come to the Edge" [referring to a poem that Peggy Penn had written and read at the AAMFT Conference when Harry was given a Lifetime Achievement and Contribution Award], which brings tears to my eyes. "Come to the edge. We might fall. / Come to the edge. It's too high! Come to the edge! And they came, and we pushed, / and they flew." But the ending of the poem was about pushing you to the edge and knowing you could fly, and you did. Harry did that. That is what he did. He was the only person that could be critical of me and make me feel stupid that I would want to go back to. Because usually when people make you feel that way, inadequate, you say I don't want to be around them again. But I wanted to go back because I wanted to be better.

H: Because you could fly. You could not make a mistake and fall all the way down to the ground because he would catch you.

D: . . . or you would catch yourself.

H: He was always acknowledging of me. It's not like he was standing up there giving a lecture.

J: . . . would you say, it's like you found a home, a place to be that made sense for you?

H: Yeah, it just worked, it really worked.

J: You could've taken the taken-for-granted, well-traveled path. I've got a psychology degree and a position at UTMB. The usual security, stability discourses. But, you didn't. You left that for the less known path to explore family therapy.

H: My mother used to say, "I think your middle name is Go. Because every time you hear the word go, you want to go. You don't know where you're going, or what you're going to do, but you want to go."

D: Nosey Rosie goes.

J: I tell you, I think we've got the title: "Nosey Rosie *Goes!*: A Conversation With Harlene Anderson."

H: I mean I'm a cautious person in many ways, but I also have an adventurous side.

J: . . . would you say you're cautious, thoughtful, and you can step into risk as well?

H: I have never worried about being able to support myself. If you want to put it in financial terms, I have always had this idea that if you do something that you like doing and you can be good at it, then the money is going to follow.

J: I can really resonate with that.

H: Money is not the most important thing.

CAROLINE: Does that attitude of always being ready to go fit with the outlook that you embrace, the not knowing.

J: It's interesting you say that, Caroline, because, to me, it seems that it is a knowing, and not knowing. Knowing that it is ambiguous and that life is filled with mystery. Feeling confident about that in a way that you are okay with it.

H: It is trusting the uncertainty.

J: Is it a position that helps you to reflect back on that "knowing" and this idea of "certainty" is just an illusion. If we actually could know in that way, what would be the joy in that? Sounds boring. What about curiosity, fascination, surprise, and mystery?

H: Really, it is trusting the uncertainty. I'd like to go back to the earlier part of our conversation about influential people that we would invite because we would know about their work. At the medical school in the Psychiatry Department, they were very interested in psychosis and schizophrenia. In particular, they were interested in how to work with the families of patients placed in those diagnostic categories. Paul Dell was particularly interested in that. We invited R.D. Lang to come for a week. That was one of our early workshops. We had that one in Houston because we knew that would be more convenient for people interested in seeing him. He was with us for a week with us hanging out. When he was based in Galveston, we rented a beach house for him. We would meet there all day long every day. His wife at that time was there.

H: We wanted to learn from this man and learn about his work. We were impressed with his alternative ideas about psychiatry.

J: Same here. We saw him as a pioneer in the way he stood up to taken-for-granted, oppressive ideas about psychiatry.

H: Absolutely, absolutely.

J: Anything that is coming to mind for you, Diana?

D: I came along in about 1980 and kept coming back. You said to Harlene, "You must have found a home" when you were talking about Harry. That's how GFI always was to people. People would go there, and they just kept coming back. You could not get rid of people. They would use that word. This is my home.

H: There was a sense of community.

D: And there still is to some extent.

H: There still is a sense of community. A sense of, I belong to this.

D: These ideas fit for me. I never had words for it before.

J: Do you mean HGI [Houston Galveston Institute] or the in the broader sense?

D: People would come to visit either for short time, or to train, or for the fellowship. It was home. I remember Jill and Gene when we used to see them more often, and they would say they came to the symposiums every year because it was their home. And then you realize, you take it for granted. Because I live with this, I can't imagine not having it for a home.

J: They speak very highly of those past conferences. I got to know more about the quality of the conferences through them.

D: So that stood out in the beginning, and it's still going on.

J: What other markers along the way would it be important for the readers to know that have contributed to where you are now?

H: I think in terms of the development of the ideas, it's important for readers to know that the evolving ideas and practices were all somewhat based in some of the original work of the multiple impact therapy team. I identified some threads and connections and created my own history of the evolution, the whole notion of working in teams, which is not something I do as much now, other than in teaching. Working in teams emphasizes the importance of difference and considers the differences a resource—the distinctions between people from various disciplines working together and what can come out of those differences. The importance of conversation goes way back to then. The idea of having a more focused conversation was because of the multiple impact therapy. I will give you a book [referring to *Multiple Impact Therapy with Families*]. It was the first mental health research project funded by the Hogg Foundation, which is a big mental health foundation in Texas. It was an innovative practice based on the theory of the time in which they did the work. It was in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It was based in child development and psychodynamic theory; at least I can see the threads. Harry used it as a training format when I started studying with him. Gregory Bateson visited the project; he had heard about what they were doing and wanted to see for himself. He called what they were doing crisscrossing conversations. For instance, the team would invite a patient who was a child, adult, or adolescent, and all the family members who could come. Because it was a state hospital, people came from all over Texas. They would also invite any community professionals who had been working with the family or the patient before the hospitalization, or who would be working with them when they went home. In the early days of MIT, there was a four-person team, originally a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a social worker, and a colleague of any discipline as the consultant to the team. The initial meeting included all those who had been invited no matter how many there were. There might be eight or there might be 28 people just basically talking in plain language about what is the problem. What's been done? What should we do? The team would collect all of these ideas and stories, and then, after a couple of hours, they would break into smaller conversations. Each member of the three-person team would go with one subgroup. One would go with the siblings. One would go with the parents. One would go with the community professionals. The fourth member of the team, the consultant, went from room to room, listening to the conversations in each. They were recording on reel-to-reel, no video or one-way mirrors at that time. If she heard the parents talking about something that she heard the community professionals talking about, or if she thought there was something they were talking about that would be good to ask them about, she would make that suggestion.

It began to take on a characteristic that Lynn Hoffman began to call the rolling conversation—what I refer to as each conversation leading to the next one. In other words, these conversations were not pre-planned. Again, it began with the “all together” meeting, and then people divided into the three subsystems. It became a series of smaller and larger membership conversations, each one informing the membership composition and topic of the next. At that time, it would have been called structural family therapy. But I don’t think structural family therapy had evolved at that time. As a matter of fact, Salvador Minuchin came to visit even before he named his work *structural family therapy*. So when I joined the team, we were studying everything that was coming out in family therapy, but also paying attention to what was happening in the broader world, particularly in the natural sciences and social sciences. One of us might pick up a magazine from the back pocket of a seat on airplane and notice an article that somehow seemed to have some relevance to our work—providing a different language for understanding our experiences and those of our clients—for instance, something written by Stephen J. Gould. This was all connected with the language. Earlier, we were of course interested in cybernetics and constructivism, but soon our interest in language led us to hermeneutics, postmodernism, and social constructionism. That’s when we invited Kenneth Gergen and John Shotter to come, and we produced a conference. John Shotter, Kenneth Gergen and Tom Andersen were there. Harry had met Ken Gergen at an APA meeting. Harry was interested in social constructionism and went to a workshop that Ken was doing at the American Psychological Association, and they talked and sensed a strong connection in interests and challenges to some traditional practices. So, it was shortly thereafter we invited him. We found John Shotter’s work through Ken’s writings.

J: What is it you appreciate about Shotter’s work?

H: He’s on the edge as what I see as an alternative intellectual and cultural movement in the world. That has to do with some of the things we are talking about, like the use of language and respecting the idea of how conversations are generative. The notions of attunement, “withness,” responsiveness, and responsive listening.

J: Sounds like I need to buy a book.

H: Shotter is very influenced by Bakhtin, Wittgenstein, Vygotsky, and Merleau-Ponty. He has a very compelling and thought-provoking way of talking about their ideas and then developing new ideas from them.

J: I have an appreciation for Bakhtin’s work. Have you read Gary Morson’s book on Bakhtin’s work?

H: I don’t think I know his work.

J: *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time*. I couldn’t put it down. It is a page-turner. He unpacks and deconstructs traditional understandings of time and then proposes infinite possibilities for the use of time in conversations. For example, every moment is not the same, they’re all different, and there is only difference. In that way, similar to Deleuze: that there is only difference.

H: Yes, it is always difference. Everything is different from moment to moment.

J: Caroline, do you have any further reflections on the overall process, or a particular aspect of the conversation?

C: Personally, I'm very grateful that I was part of this conversation and hearing the rich history and experiencing you, Harlene, through that history. The way you talk about it, that something was driving you to want to go forward and explore new territories? To me, that is very inspiring. To always be curious about exploring new territories. I think it is important and something to be remembered.

H: Yes, I often began workshops saying that it's not like I just woke up one morning saying this is what I decided to do and figured out how to do it. There's a long history with a lot of experiences. There were a lot of important moments and a lot of people involved. It's still evolving. Hopefully, we will meet again 6 months from now, or 6 years from now. I might be saying some similar things, but I can pretty well guarantee you I will be saying some things differently. That is the exciting part of this. The ideas and practices are a slow but always moving target.

C: And the resonance for me, I think, has to do with the fact that I'm moving here, and I find myself feeling like a beginner, which in many ways I'm not. But it's a good place to be. I like that because it's different. I want to stay with that rather than being focused on what I already know. I like that newness.

J: Is that part of what you'll take away from this conversation today?

C: Yes.

J: Anything else you might take away from this conversation, because you are going through a significant period of transition and transformation yourself?

C: What you called invitational language, that is staying with me as well. I would like to think more about that and read more about that. I would like my language to be more invitational. There are so many opportunities to be invitational. Like meeting people who have very different beliefs, personally, socially, professionally. There are many possible invitational conversations. I want to pay attention to being more invitational in conversations.

J: Thank you, Caroline. Harlene, can you talk a bit about what it was like experiencing these developments in a place like Galveston Island? Do you think the cultural ambiance had any effect? Like those after-work relaxing conversations at Harry and Leslie's house, sipping a glass of wine, enjoying fresh flounder for dinner that was caught right off their dock?

H: Galveston is very interesting. Of course, I haven't lived here in quite a while. I moved from Galveston in 1983. Even though the Psychiatry Department was more traditional, certainly the psychology and family therapy group was not. The professionals in the community were all quite socially liberal. It was always a community in which anything goes, particularly challenging the status quo.

D: My experience is pretty "medical model" now.

H: The whole thing has just changed dramatically over the years.

J: Diana, do you have any last reflections or questions about what stood out or moved you in this conversation?

D: Well, I was thinking about that when you asked Caroline what stood out for her. She expressed her appreciation for being included to witness the reflection on this rich history. I too am just feeling very appreciative right now. We have a new group of student interns at the Institute in Houston. So this is really good for me, to reflect and hear the language again.

J: Harlene, any last thoughts or reflections?

H: I was just thinking about something else that maybe you don't know that you might need for the article. In the eighties, I lived in Boston for 6 years. That's the time that Harry and I really started writing a lot. I went to Boston in 1983 and I went back to Galveston in 1989. We started writing, and we would use old-fashioned electronic transmission where you had to hook your phone up to your computer. Sometimes it would work and sometimes it would not work. This was before the way of the Internet. Occasionally, Harry would come up to Boston and spend a week or a few days, and we would drive over and meet with Lynn Hoffman. I always came back to Galveston to participate in some of the trainings. I had a house in Galveston.

D: Another thing that you probably do not know is that Harry initially did not like to write. Harlene encouraged him.

H: He was concerned that if you wrote something, then people always saw you that way.

D: . . . then he would have to say I don't think that way anymore.

H: It kind of sets you in time. By the time I had met Harry in the training, he had published a lot. But his early work was in learning theory and experimental psychology. He was one of the creators of the Texas Psychological Association. As I mentioned earlier, Harry was part of the group appointed by the governor of Texas that closed down some juvenile detention centers. He was always busy traveling around doing workshops and teaching and talking to people and holding court. He just never took the time to write. He would say, by the time it's published, my ideas will have changed. During the process of writing, your ideas are changing. Of course, then people sort of pigeonhole you. We started getting invitations to write, often to contribute chapters to books. People would come to our workshops, or different conferences. The 1988 article in *Family Process* that we wrote came about because Harry came to Boston. I organized a family therapy workshop for him to do. Carlos Sluzki was there. He and Harry had known each other over the years. He said he wanted us contribute something for *Family Process*. He said, do you have a paper? We said we have something that was in publication. We sent a different version to him, and the rest is history. That's how that came about. The precursor to the *Family Process* article was published in a psychology journal.

J: What do you think he would say about what you are up to today?

H: I think he would say what my parents would say, that he was proud of me and what I've done. How I've have been able to recognize talent in people and nurture that. And, that I had kept up the momentum. And, that I have not been duplicating,

or replicating, or creating a “more of the same” therapy, but one that it is always shifting and changing. He would see that I have remained curious.

J: Would you say that is true to the original values of what the two of you were doing together?

H: I would say yes. However, now I’m wondering if he would say what my husband said a couple of times recently, which is that maybe I should be writing more.

J: Gets you thinking about becoming re-involved with writing?

H: Yes. My husband is very supportive of what I do. It’s not about the time, but that writing is the way others can learn about your work and your ideas. And, that you can try to make a difference and influence people to think. For me, others’ writings invite me to think, and my own writing always involves critically thinking and produces something different than what I had in mind when I began.

J: . . . keeps the ideas and practices alive and in circulation?

H: Harry had really got into writing. The way that I got into writing is that we would have an idea and say we were going to write it. Or, someone would invite us to write something, and we would think, when are we going to do this? So, I would start something and send it to him. That was food for thought. He would take off with it and come back with pages and pages. All of these wonderful things he would send back, and I would work on it and add my ideas into it.

J: So, you would initiate it and get the spark going?

H: Initially, yes. Then, before he died he was initiating some things. He was writing a lot of jewels that he called “bits and pieces.”

J: Harlene, what is it you miss most about Harry?

H: I miss his friendship. Of course, I miss the intellectual companionship. I miss that. I was determined after he died that I was going to find a way to keep that in my life and to continue doing what we had started doing. Well, by that time, the name of the Institute had changed. That’s another long story. He and I and another colleague had been looking at places thinking that we needed to buy a new building. By this time, Harry and I were working full time at the Institute. We had a whole staff of people. We decided we needed our own space in Houston. Then Harry died. I wanted to keep the spirit of our work alive and moving forward. So, I started looking at real estate opportunities with an intent to buy a building and keep our Institute thriving. I got on the phone and made appointments with realtors. Then, I drove by the Mount Vernon house where the Institute was for over 20 years and I thought, wow! I walked up, and I could look in the windows and see that it had potential. I made an offer and they accepted.

D: And when did you buy the house? Harry died in 1991. I was on the faculty that year. I looked at some places with you.

H: I bought the house in 1993.

J: What is the “spirit” you were carrying on? What was so important to you to carry on?

H: It’s the ideas and the work and the sense of community. There was a group of people that were connected with this. It was a life we had all created. It was

a life of ideas and practices. It was not only important to us, but also to so many other people.

D: Community.

J: Would you think, even important to people you have never met?

H: Yes. The Institute has been around for 37 years, and it has always been a hand-to-mouth existence.

J: The ideas and sense of community are important to you.

H: It's an ethical, social, and political commitment. This is a very small thing that I can do. It is my contribution to changing the world. It matters.

J: Yes, it does matter. Although I appreciate your humility in saying "it's a small thing," I think the effect of you continuing to champion, enliven, and sustain non-normative, non-pathologizing practices is an important thing in the social-political backdrop in which therapy is currently situated.

Harlene, when we began this conversation, I said my hopes were that you would be able to re-engage with your own history in a way that would reflect the important values that contribute to the philosophy, values, and practices you currently bring to your work and personal life today. I said I would be interested in what particularly resonates as you look back into your history. I asked you to consider who contributed more significantly to your life? What events were more significant or pivotal? What remains in movement?

My experience of participating in this retrospective with you is that this was not a docile reminiscence, but an active reengagement with the history of your relationships with significant people and how they have helped contribute to those important values and ethics that you keep close to you in your current work and personal life. In addition to bringing your relationships with your parents and Harry Goolishian to the foreground, you also introduced us to many other significant people who traveled alongside you at different points of your journey. As you revisited the times and events, I was left with the sense that there was an outpouring of new ideas and a breaking away from normative standards, judgments, and the need to "fit in." It must have been exciting to live through those times. As you were recounting the history of your relationship with Harry Goolishian, I began wondering how your relationship with him affected his sense of purpose and what he thought was possible to think and do.

Harlene, thank you for sharing such a richly textured and lively account of your history. As I said, given the present social context that therapists practice in today, this article is timely. My hopes are that you have provided a window into the sentiments that supported the development of your philosophy, values, and ethics. I also hope that as a result of reading this account that the readership of *JST* can contribute to that sense of community.

H: Well, thank you for having this idea. It's been fun, and I've enjoyed getting to know you and Caroline a bit better, and of course having Diana sitting across from me.

**SELECTED WORKS BY AND INTERVIEWS
WITH HARLENE ANDERSON**

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